



Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman
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<http://edworkforce.house.gov/edwatch>

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Keegan Endorses Flexibility, Choice, Bush Reform Effort

Testifying before the House Education Reform Subcommittee yesterday, Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Lisa Graham Keegan highlighted the key components of President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* proposal, including flexibility, accountability, and choice.

"At the state level, flexibility allows us opportunities to think about new ways of administering programs or delivering services to meet a defined goal, or improving services through innovation," testified Keegan. "We've also done something else with this flexibility – we've used it to put into place a system that provides real educational choice for parents and their children."

"Tell us what you want us to accomplish with federal funds, and give us the flexibility we need to make it work well in Arizona," Keegan stated. "If our assessment program indicates that we're not doing a good job, we expect to be penalized. But long before that happens, we know the demand for accountability will spur the changes we need to succeed with our students."

States have become the laboratories of education innovation in the effort to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers. The President's proposal gives them the freedom and flexibility they need to implement education reforms that have proven successful in enhancing student achievement.

Message of the Day

Giving state and local officials additional flexibility helps them tailor programs to more closely meet students' unique needs and priorities.

- ❑ *Real accountability means imposing real consequences for chronic failure.*
- ❑ *There must be an escape hatch for students trapped in failing schools that do not teach and will not change.*
- ❑ *Empowering parents to remove their children from poor schools -- even if only as a last resort -- can compel failing schools to improve and help to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers.*

DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- The Bush proposal establishes a rigorous accountability system, including asking states to design and implement annual math and reading tests for students in grades three through eight.
- As a last resort, the plan gives parents the option of removing their child from a low-performing school and sending them to a different public school or a private school after three years of certified failure.
- According to a recent bipartisan poll conducted for the National Education Association, 63 percent of Americans support the President's school choice plan.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"In Arizona, we believe choice is a right that parents should expect; it should not be considered an extravagance the government, in its benevolence, graciously bestows on the public." **Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Lisa Graham Keegan, March 14, 2001, testimony before the House Education Reform Subcommittee**